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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0763  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 2293  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0753  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0140  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NOUAKCHOTT 000436

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SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN ELECTION CHRONICLES FOR JULY 5 -- THE  
OPPOSITION COMPLAINS

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 431

Classified By: Ambassador Mark M. Boulware for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (SBU) Minister of the Interior satisfied: The International Contact Group (ICG) met with the Transitional Government of National Unity's Minister of the Interior Mohamed Ould Rzeizime (from the anti-coup FNDD political alliance) on July 2. Rzeizime stated election planning was on track and said he had no complaints or particular needs.

12. (C) The opposition complains: FNDD and RFD brought to ICG a long list of complaints on July 5. They complained to the ICG about inappropriate involvement of government civilians and military personnel in Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz's campaign. They also accused Aziz of continued use of military aircraft for campaigning purposes. Comment: Aziz's high-profile June 24 forced landing in the desert brought to the public light his use of military aircraft for campaign travel. Local press reported the week of June 28 that Aziz had resumed use of military aircraft despite the incident; although the Aziz camp claimed that the aircraft was rented. Media also reported that Aziz has been using a phone number that belongs to the Presidency to make national and international phone calls and that his campaign director uses a government cell phone. Aziz's campaign staff has also been spotted driving government vehicles. End comment. The opposition expressed concerns that the inter-ministerial committee proposed by the ICG to oversee Food Security Commission activities has not been formed. The committee's mission is to ensure food distribution does not become a campaign tool for the majority's candidate. FNDD and RFD representatives drew attention to Taqadoumy website director Hannevy Ould Dah's continued imprisonment, which they view as proof of an ongoing climate of repression and intimidation (reftel). Another complaint is that the National Independent Electoral Commission's (CENI) regional directors were appointed by previous CENI leadership and may be potentially partial. The FNDD and RFD requested international observers to ensure electoral transparency.

13. (C) ICG asks the opposition to work with the government: The ICG encouraged the opposition to bring their complaints to the appropriate government institutions, stating that ICG is not a supra-national conflict resolution organ. ICG should be informed of grievances brought to the government but its role is not to solve conflicts but to put pressure on the government to ensure complaints are addressed.

14. (C) ICG urges Prime Minister to foster climate of confidence: The ICG met with Prime Minister Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf (majority) to stress the need to foster a climate of confidence. The group thanked him for issuing a communique urging government officials to remain neutral. Laghdaf reported he had met with the thirteen governors ("Walis") and asked them to treat candidates equally. According to the Prime Minister, the new government's ministers are getting along well and the Council of Ministers is running smoothly. The inter-ministerial committee in charge of overseeing the Food Security Commission, which will be composed of the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development, will be formed shortly. The ICG stressed the importance of guaranteeing government neutrality and said it is the Mauritanian government's responsibility, and not the international community's, to organize credible elections.

15. (C) CENI meets with ICG: The newly formed CENI met with the ICG for the first time. The ICG asked CENI members to go beyond party lines as they noted strong partisan tendencies among members who stated their party affiliation when introducing themselves. The climate among CENI leaders is far from cohesive -- in their first group meeting, they were unable to reach consensus in a number of key areas. Issues under discussion include hiring more regional CENI members to balance the influence of regional directors appointed by the previous CENI and whether to continue paying salaries to CENI members that were replaced and who had a six-month mandate. When asked about pressing needs, CENI members responded they

NOUAKCHOTT 00000436 002 OF 002

needed vehicles and funds as opposed to technical experts. Comment: The request for vehicles comes as a surprise as outgoing CENI President Professor Camara told PolOff that all previous CENI members had received brand new vehicles. End comment. The group stated they had already met with electoral experts sent by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).  
HANKINS